

## **I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **A. Overview**

The Riverside Auto Center Specific Plan was prepared by the City of Riverside in co-operation with the Riverside Auto Center dealers. The Specific Plan as adopted on October 23, 1990, encompassed 139 acres of land generally bordered by Freeway 91 on the west, the AT&SF Railroad Easement on the east, Winstrom St. on the north and Vance Street to the south. Specific Plan amendment, SP-003-989 and SP-005-001, added an additional nine acres of land to the project boundaries. This additional property is located at the southwest corner of Adams Street/Auto Center Drive and the AT&SF railroad tracks.

The Riverside Auto Center, developed in 1965, was one of the earliest auto centers constructed in the United States and the forerunner of the auto malls and auto centers of the 80's. Although unique for its day, the Riverside Auto Center is no longer at the forefront of Auto Center design in the Southern California marketplace of today.

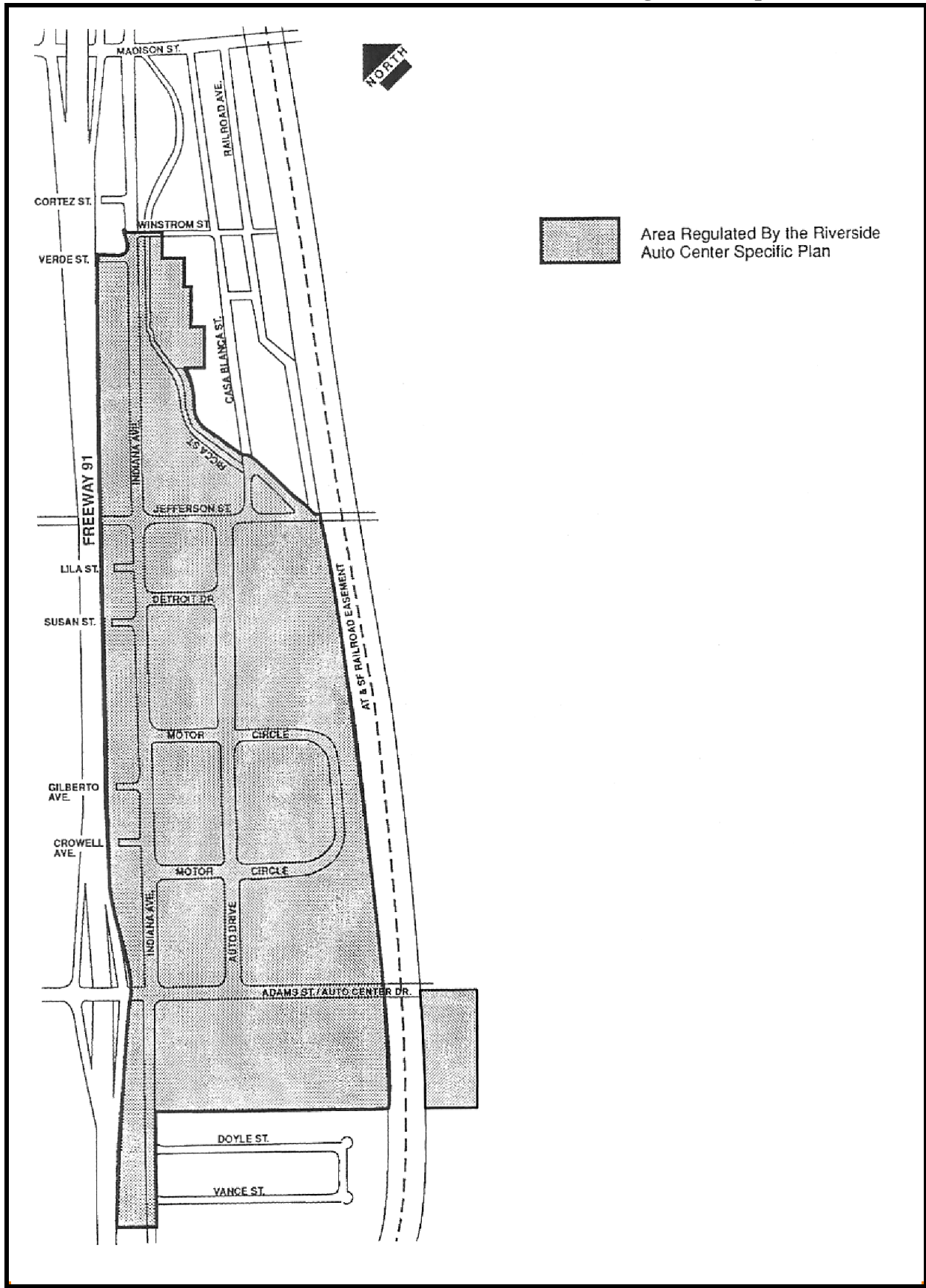
This Specific Plan is designed to assist in the revitalization of the Auto Center. The Plan provides special privileges as well as special restrictions because:

- a. The Auto Center is a unique, one of a kind facility in the City.
- b. The Auto Center provides major public benefits by:
  1. Providing substantial sales tax revenue to the City.
  2. Providing an attractive shopping area and shopping convenience for comparison shopping through the grouping of automobile sales uses in an attractive environment.
  3. Clustering automobile sales and related uses in an attractive environment. Such uses have elsewhere been developed in a haphazard way creating negative impacts on surrounding uses.
- c. The property owners and Auto Dealers Association intend to provide substantial funding for improvements to the Auto Center.

### **B. Statutory Authorization**

The Specific Plan is authorized by Article 8 of the California Government Code (Section 65450 et. seq.) and this document meets the requirements as specified in said code. The Specific Plan carries out the objectives of the Riverside General Plan. It provides the detailed criteria for development of specific sites and public improvements.

Figure 1 — Specific Plan Area



### **C. History**

The Riverside Auto Center was opened in February, 1965 as the world's first auto center. The Center, which opened on a 55 acre site with seven dealers at a cost of 8 million dollars, was totally financed by the dealers with no public subsidy. The idea for an auto center originated in a discussion among five dealers. They originally purchased a site near the Arlington community which was re-zoned by the City Council on a 6 to 2 vote. However the following year in a public referendum the Zoning was overturned by 56 percent of those voting.

Faced with the prospect of losing the Auto Center to Rubidoux, the City helped the dealers find the current site which had little opposition and was re-zoned and built. Dealers reported an 18 - 26% increase in business.

As a matter of interest it should be noted that Dick Clark was part of the dedication ceremonies, and you could buy a new Mercury for \$2,150 with a 4.5% interest loan. Total sales tax collected the first year of operation was \$1.1 million.

### **D. Prior Study**

In 1988 the Chambers of Commerce, in conjunction with the auto dealers in the Auto Center and the City of Riverside, commissioned a study to examine ways in which the Auto Center could be improved to compete with more modern auto sales establishments. This study was undertaken by Randolph Hlubik Associates Inc., Landscape Architects (RHA, Inc.) and was completed in October, 1988.

The Study recommended a variety of land use, street, landscape, lighting and sign improvements for the Center and provided considerable material and ideas on which this Specific Plan is based.